

SECTION 2F. The sums set forth in this section are hereby appropriated from the Education and Transportation Fund, for the purposes and subject to the conditions specified in this section and subject to the laws regulating the disbursement of public funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026. All appropriations in this section shall not be subject to section 5D of chapter 29 of the General Laws.

Fiscal Year 2026 Resource Summary (\$000)

Government Area		FY2026 Budgetary Recommendation
Education		1,185,000
Total		1,185,000

Education

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	450,000,000
1596-2422 SCHOOL MEALS	170,000,000
For the reimbursement of school districts and participating schools for the costs of providing universal free school meals pursuant to section 1C of chapter 69 of the General Laws; provided, that districts receiving funds under this item shall not implement a meal charge for students; provided further, that participating districts that are eligible for reimbursement under the community eligibility provision of the National School Lunch Program or an applicable provision of the National Child Nutrition Act, Public Law 111-296, shall adopt said provision to maximize access to federal funds; and provided further, that not later than January 15, 2027, the department of elementary and secondary education shall submit a report to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education and the executive office for administration and finance that shall include: (i) data on any change in utilization of school lunch services in districts receiving funding under this item, delineated by free, reduced and paid students as defined by the National School Lunch Program; (ii) the distribution of funding paid through this item delineated by school district; and (iii) options to reform, modify or extend the program in a manner that promotes equity, maximizes federal funds and improves predictability and sustainability of funding	
Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%	
1596-2436 MENTAL HEATLH SUPPORTS AND WRAPAROUNDS	5,000,000
For the development of a statewide birth through higher education framework for mental and behavioral health which may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) guiding principles and strategies related to providing social emotional supports; (ii) mental and behavioral health supports; (iii) suicide prevention; and (iv) relevant professional development in educational settings; provided, that the framework shall be developed in collaboration with the executive office of health and human services and the department	

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of mental health, experts in childhood mental health, educators including those from early education and care programs, elementary and secondary public schools, and public institutions of higher education, students, families, and other stakeholders as appropriate; and provided further, that funds may be expended to implement the framework and relevant mental and behavioral health supports for students provided that any unexpended funds in this item shall not revert but shall be made available until August 30, 2027

Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%

1596-2450 STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT EXPANSION 225,000,000

For school aid to cities, towns, regional school districts, counties maintaining vocational and agricultural schools and independent vocational schools; provided, that funds in this item shall be in addition to funds appropriated in item 7061-0008 and may be distributed under chapters 70 and 76 of the General Laws and section 3; and provided further, that the commissioner of elementary and secondary education may transfer funds from this item to said item 7061-0008

Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%

1596-2451 SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENTS 50,000,000

For reimbursements to regional school districts for the transportation of pupils and to cities, towns, regional vocational or county agricultural school districts, independent vocational schools and collaboratives for certain expenditures for transportation of nonresident pupils to approved vocational-technical programs of any regional or county agricultural school district, city, town, independent school or collaborative under section 8A of chapter 74 of the General Laws; provided, that if the amount appropriated in this item is insufficient to fully fund said section 8A of said chapter 74, initial reimbursements made by the department of elementary and secondary education may be prorated by the department to all eligible cities, towns, regional vocational or county agricultural school districts, independent vocational schools and collaboratives; provided further, that funds from this item for reimbursements to regional school districts for the transportation of pupils shall be in addition to funds appropriated in item 7035-0006; and provided further, that the commissioner of elementary and secondary education may transfer funds from this item to said item 7035-0006

Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%

Office of the Secretary of Education 25,000,000

1596-2437 EARLY LITERACY 25,000,000

For an early literacy initiative directed by the secretary of education, in consultation and coordination with the commissioner of elementary and secondary education and the commissioner of early education and care, to be known as Literacy Launch: Reading Success from Age 3 through Grade 3; provided, that said initiative shall provide grants, programming and materials to

increase the number of public schools and licensed early education and care providers in the commonwealth providing evidence-based literacy instruction to students in pre-kindergarten through grade 3; provided further, that grants may support activities including, but not limited to: (i) the adoption and implementation of high quality curricular materials by public schools and districts and early education program providers; (ii) the provision of technical support, coaching, and professional development to maximize educator impact and improve student learning of literacy skills for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 3, including the support of required staff for the development and implementation of the program by the granting agencies; (iii) an acceleration of the program review of educator preparation programs approved by the department of elementary and secondary education; (iv) the coordination and alignment of assessment and screening, curriculum, and professional development across the departments of early education and care and elementary and secondary education; and (v) other professional learning initiatives and supports related to literacy assessment, measurement, and instruction for specific groups of learners or specific evidence-based materials; provided further, that grant recipients may include, but not be limited to: (i) public schools and districts and licensed early education and care programs providing pre-kindergarten instructional services; (ii) the University of Massachusetts; (iii) state universities and community colleges; and (iv) other educator preparation programs; provided further, that not later than November 30, 2026, the secretary of education shall provide a summary of the current and planned allocations of funds for each program funded through this item to the joint committee on education and the house and senate committees on ways and means and that such report shall include: (i) a list of grant recipients; (ii) grants awarded delineated by recipient; (iii) any matching funds or services contributed by grant recipients or program participants; (iv) the purposes of the grants; and (v) a detailed breakdown of the purposes and amounts of administrative costs charged to this item; and provided further, that any unexpended funds in this item shall not revert but shall be made available until August 30, 2027

Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%

Department of Early Education and Care	373,000,000
1596-2410 CHILDCARE GRANTS TO PROVIDERS	275,000,000
For funds to support available capacity, support workforce, and address operational costs within the early education and care sector; provided, that grants shall be available to child care programs licensed or otherwise funded by the department of early education and care; provided further, that the distribution of grants shall prioritize equity and early education programs with higher percentages of state subsidized enrollment; provided further, that such grants shall be provided to child care providers whose enrollment includes at least fifty percent of children with a state subsidy; and provided further, that funds from this line item shall be expended in coordination with funds from item 3000-1045	

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	Education and Transportation Fund.....	100%	
1596-2452	CHILD CARE SUPPORTS For efforts to maintain capacity and the fiscal year 2025 rate structure for the department of early education and care's child care financial assistance programs; provided, that the commissioner of early education and care may transfer funds between this item and items 3000-1000, 3000-3060 and 3000-4060		98,000,000
	Education and Transportation Fund.....	100%	
Department of Higher Education			337,000,000
1596-2414	FINANCIAL AID EXPANSION For a scholarship program to provide financial assistance to Massachusetts students enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education in any public institutions of higher education; provided, that funds from this item may be expended on the administration of the scholarship program; provided further, that the commissioner of higher education shall adopt guidelines governing the eligibility and the awarding of financial assistance; and provided further, that funds may be expended for an office of higher education success and completion within the department of higher education to support: (i) data collection and tracking; and (ii) the development of best practices for higher education student success and degree completion including, but not limited to, the alignment of community college programming with labor market demands		80,000,000
	Education and Transportation Fund.....	100%	
1596-2417	HIGHER EDUCATION CAPITAL FUNDING For a reserve for the study, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, site preparation, demolition, system repair and replacement, climate resiliency and adaptation, and other capital investment, planning, and improvements of campus facilities, including instructional and student facilities, laboratory facilities, infrastructure modernization, decarbonization, accessibility improvements, critical repair or other capital asset needs, administered by the executive office for administration and finance in consultation with the executive office of education and the division of capital asset management and maintenance; provided, that funds from this item may be transferred to the University of Massachusetts Building Authority and the Massachusetts State College Building Authority under a memorandum of understanding or agreement relating to capital planning or capital projects approved by the secretary of administration and finance; and provided further, that funds from this item may be used for innovative strategies that result in debt reduction or savings for public higher education institutions		125,000,000
	Education and Transportation Fund.....	100%	

1596-2418	<p>MASSRECONNECT</p> <p>For MassReconnect, a scholarship program to provide financial assistance to students from the commonwealth who: (i) are enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education at a public state community college; (ii) are age 25 or older as of the first day of classes; (iii) have not previously earned a college degree; and (iv) are enrolled in at least 6 credits; provided, that funds shall be used to cover any remaining tuition and fees, books and supplies due for any eligible student after all other sources of federal and state grant aid have been exhausted; provided further, that funds from this item may be expended on student support services, administration and marketing of said scholarship program; and provided further, that appropriated funds may be expended for programs or activities during the summer months</p> <p>Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%</p>	24,000,000
1596-2439	<p>STATE UNIVERSITY SUCCESS</p> <p>For grants to state universities for cohort counseling to ensure student success, provide wraparound supports and services to improve outcomes for their most vulnerable populations including, but not limited to, low-income, first-generation, minority and disabled students and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning students; provided, that funds shall be disbursed based on a formula and criteria developed by the department of higher education; provided further, that eligible wraparound support activities shall include, but not be limited to, peer mentors, academic skills workshops and targeted academic, career and scholarship advising; provided further, that appropriated funds may be expended for programs or activities during the summer months; and provided further, that all funds distributed may be spent solely on personnel costs at the discretion of the universities</p> <p>Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%</p>	14,000,000
1596-2501	<p>FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE</p> <p>For a Free Community College Program for students who: (i) are enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education at a public community college in Massachusetts; (ii) have completed a free application for federal student aid or an equivalent application for state-funded financial assistance; (iii) have not earned a prior baccalaureate degree, or the equivalent; and (vi) are enrolled in at least 6 credits; provided, that funds shall be expended to cover any remaining tuition and fees due and an allowance for the cost of books, supplies and other expenses for any eligible student after all other sources of federal and state grant aid have been exhausted; provided further, that students whose household income is at or below 125 per cent of the state median income shall be granted an allowance of up to \$1,200 per academic year for books, supplies and other expenses for attending a community college program; provided, however, that said allowance shall not preclude students from receiving assistance through MassGrant or MassGrant Plus, subject to the regulations of said programs; provided further, that the commissioner of higher education, in</p>	94,000,000

consultation with the executive office of education, shall adopt guidelines governing eligibility for and the awarding of financial assistance under this item; provided further, that funds from this item may be expended on student support services, administration and marketing of said scholarship program; provided further, that students aged 25 or older may be referred to as MassReconnect students; provided further, that funds from this item may be expended to create awareness and conduct public outreach related to MassReconnect; provided further, that funds may be expended for programs or activities during the summer months; provided further, that tuition and fees at public community colleges shall not increase more than the lesser of: (1) the ratio of the value of the implicit price deflator for state and local government purchases in the third quarter of the prior fiscal year to its value in the third quarter of the fiscal year 2 years prior; and (2) 1.045; provided further, that the department shall analyze the faculty and staff capacity to meet the needs of the program established in this item, to ensure a sufficient workforce; provided further, that not later than February 2, 2026, the department of higher education, shall submit a report to the joint committee on higher education and the house and senate committees on ways and means detailing program uptake, funding distribution, and the metrics and benchmarks being used to measure program success including, but not limited to: (a) enrollment; (b) retention; (c) barriers to student participation; and (d) demographic data related to program participants; and provided further, that not later than June 1, 2026, the department of higher education shall submit information to the executive office for administration and finance, the board of higher education, the joint committee on higher education and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the number of students participating in the program at each community college

Education and Transportation Fund..... 100%